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Rear Adm. Chinn, Defense Health Agency's Director of Research Development and Acquisition Visits NAMRU-Dayton

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Rear Admiral Colin Chinn, Director of Research, Development & Acquisition (RDA) Directorate at the Defense Health Agency, visited Naval Medical Research Unit - Dayton as part of a joint visit to 711th Human Performance Wing, which is collocated at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Dr. Joyce Rohan explains joint Air Force - Navy research on biological mechanisms associated with behavioral changes and effects of transcranial direct-current stimulation on cognitive performance. Sept. 23, 2016.

DAYTON, Ohio - Rear Adm. Colin G. Chinn is the Director of Research, Development & Acquisition (RDA) at the Defense Health Agency was onsite at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB) to meet with Air Force and Navy medical research subject matter experts in an effort to foster strategic partnerships and learn about those already in existence, Sept 23.

Chinn leads RDA to advance collaborative innovative medical research and development to improve military community health and save lives on and off the battlefield.

His visit to 711th Human Performance Wing (711 HPW) and Naval Medical Research Unit Dayton (NAMRU-D) provided a platform on which leadership from all three commands could discuss how to effectively align their goals, all of which point directly to the safety of the warfighter.

Capt. Rees Lee, NAMRU-D commanding officer, highlighted the exceptional capabilities.

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"Navy Medicine researchers have developed, and continue to develop, as a result of fully engaging in a partnership with the collocated 711 HPW," said Lee.

Brigadier General Mark Koeniger, Commander, 711 HPW, hosted two focus area briefs for Chinn highlighting the cutting edge initiatives Air Force and Navy researchers are working on jointly to provide potential solutions to problems facing military aviators. The first was regarding inflight physiological incidents in which scientists are performing environmental altitude chamber testing of candidate oxygen and carbon dioxide, pressure, and flow sensors for integration into flight masks for hypoxia detection. This project is sponsored by U.S. School of Aerospace Medicine, located at WPAFB.

The second focus area addressed joint research on biological mechanisms associated with behavioral changes and effects of a type of brain stimulation that uses low level current delivered through an electrode placed on top of the scalp. Transcranial direct-current stimulation (tDCS) has been demonstrated to improve symptoms in patients suffering from neurological disorders as well as improve performance in healthy subjects. Researchers are trying to understand the underlying physiologic mechanisms of this brain stimulation technique and its short and long-term impact on brain function. The goal is to develop this promising technology into an effective method to improve cognitive performance while mitigating potential adverse neurologic symptoms. Observations have been made that demonstrate that this non-invasive electrical stimulation is capable of modifying synaptic plasticity, an early glimpse as to the mechanism leading to improved patient performance.

The research team at NAMRU-Dayton work with military, government, academic and industry partners to develop innovative solutions for the aeromedical and toxicology threats to maximize warfighter performance and survivability.

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